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THE
Will and Testament
OF
THOMAS GWIN, K
Of FALMOUTH;
BEING SOME
RELIGIOUS and SERIOUS
CONSIDERATIONS,
WHICH

He recommends to his CHILDREN
and FRIENDS, and such as may
remain after his Decease.

Writ in the Fifty-second Year of his Age.

THE SECOND EDITION.

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THE

WILLIAM AND ILLUSTRATIONS

OF

THOMAS GUY

OF EXETER

REPRINTED

REPRINTED AND ILLUSTRATED



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE CITY OF

and the City of Exeter

are hereby notified

that the following

are the names of the

persons who have

been elected

to the office of

the following

SOME
RELIGIOUS and SERIOUS
CONSIDERATIONS, &c.

WHereas it hath pleased Almighty God, mine Heavenly Father, to grant and continue to me Soundness of Memory, and a clear Understanding, in a Body much broken and weakned by the Gout, which hath brought me sometimes not only into a Remembrance of my Latter-end, but near to the Gates of the Grave: I thought I could no way better employ the Faculties of Body or Mind, that yet remain with me, than in recounting the wonderful Acts of the Lord, and in sounding forth his Praise, and in dealing friendly and freely, in Matter of Advice and Counsel, to the Sons and Daughters of Men.

It is then not to be expected, that this my Will and Testament should contain any thing in respect of temporal Goods, or the Disposition of that Estate in the World, that the Lord hath been pleased to lend me, (neither

would I be so understood) seeing the many Changes that this World is subject to, may cause me to make Alterations in that Will; But this belonging to another and higher Court, where God alone is Judge, will, I hope, as to me, prove Irrevocable and unchangeable.

I had some Time thought to have inserted in that my Will, as to temporal Affairs, mine Acknowledgments of the Greatness and Goodness of God, and of what he hath done for my Soul; but I found it would then grow too bulky, and perhaps be hid in a Corner: Whereas, what I now write may possibly fall into the Hands of some one or other, who may be concerned for the Increase of Sobriety, Justice and Godliness in the Earth, and may spread these Papers, where they may be of Service, when I may be removed to my everlasting Habitation.

In the first Place then, with humble and hearty Devotion, I desire to adore the Great GOD, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, in and through the blessed Spirit, which God in his Goodness hath shed abroad in our Hearts, and by which we are enabled to approach unto him, with broken and contrite Spirits, which always was, and is a Sacrifice acceptable unto him: I hereby freely acknowledge, that without the Help of this Spirit, *We know not what to pray for as we ought*; nor can we do any thing acceptable to God; which hath
often

often engaged me to cry to the Lord, as did David, saying, *Cast me not away from thy Presence, neither take thy Holy Spirit from me.* I have therefore esteemed myself no ways obliged to obey or regard the Injunctions of learned Men or Synods of Divines, as they call them, in respect of the Worship of God, any farther than I have felt and experienced them to be the Product of God's Spirit: And this I have not done presumptuously, or as thinking myself wiser than those that went before me; but, observing the Mistakes, Contradictions and Disputes, that even in the primitive Times, to say, soon after the Apostles Days, they fell into, as well as in sundry other Ages of the Church; I thought myself no way obliged to follow the Traditions of Men, biased it may be either with Mistake or Prejudice, but the Holy and undeniable Dictates of the ever-blessed Spirit, and what is the real Product thereof, viz. the blessed Writings of the Holy and Inspired Pen-men, contained in that Book, we usually call the BIBLE: These Holy Writings, the Precepts Prophecies and Histories therein contained, I do commend and recommend to such as may live after me, as having had, for more than forty Years, a sensible Benefit and Advantage by them, in, and through the Holy Spirit, the Divine Original and Well-spring of eternal Life, who, as we wait for it, will open Scriptures to us, and will illuminate our Understandings in the Use of them, that we shall find them *profitable for Instruction, Correction,*

rection, Reproof and Doctrine ; and able to make wise unto Salvation, through Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe also, and acknowledge, that it is in and through the Heavenly Man Christ Jesus, the Lord from Heaven, the Mediator betwixt God and Man, that all the Blessings of God are conveyed, and do come down upon the Sons and Daughters of Men ; and more especially those great Blessings of the Visitations of his Love and Favour, *That God sent him, in the Fulness of Time, to taste Death for Mankind ; that he was the Hope and Expectation of all the Holy Patriarchs and Prophets, before and under the Law, the Life, the Comfort and Rejoicing of their Souls, that they saw his Day, and were glad of it ; they drank of that Rock which followed them, which Rock was Christ.* And the same Christ is the Confidence and Tower of Defence, the Author and Support of the Faith and Trust of all God's People ; the Door of the Heavenly Sheepfold, through which they go in and out, and find Pastures of Life, where their Love to him grows, and is increased in their Hearts, through the Goodness of God in him.

These Considerations I have found fruitful, as the lowly Valleys ; I have not found it my Place, with human Wisdom, to make Inquiries into the Divine Nature, or how, or in what Manner the Father and Son are united ;

united : I have reckoned it a Work of Pre-
 sumption, and that which the poor, vain and
 low Understanding of poor Mortals cannot
 fathom : I have lamented the Case of the
 Church in *Constantine's* Days, who by the
 too nice and subtil Distinctions of some Men,
 were driven into Heats and Parties, and
 under Pretence of maintaining the Faith, de-
 stroyed Charity : It is enough for me, that
 he hath said it, *I and my Father are one* : And
 this is my Soul made sensible of ; because the
 Father hath drawn me to the Son, and my
 Hope and Expectation is, that the Son will
 bring me to the Father : Therefore believe,
 Oh my Soul ! and thou wilt thereby attain
 that Knowledge of God, which the vulturous
 Eye cannot see, nor searching Wit of Man
 can ever comprehend.

I am further to acknowledge, the Lord's
 great Mercy to me, in respect of a sober
 Education ; an Evidence of his Care over
 me, before I could care for myself, as also
 those early Convictions and Reproofs I have
 found on my Spirit, in my very Infancy,
 which would sometimes bring me on my
 Knees, in solitary Places, to beg Pardon of
 God for a Day, or some Time mis-spent, or
 for some Act of Transgression I had done ;
 and the Lord was near me in those Days,
 though I knew him not : And although, as I
 grew up, I fell in with bad Company, espe-
 cially in the fifteenth Year of my Age, yet
 the Lord left me not, but followed me with
 his

his Judgments, and brought Dread and Fear upon me, and disabled me from running with them to the same Excess of Wickedness; and I have since often considered it, as a great Mercy from the Lord's Hand, that he smote me at that Time with much Sickness, and Infirmary of Body, which I believe had notwithstanding a very good Influence on my Soul.

I must also commemorate the Lord's Call, which I soon after met with, which at once broke me off from all my former Companions and Societies, and made me willing to suffer Reproaches for Christ's Sake; and altho' the Opposition of the Adversary, both within and without, was great in those Days, and his Inroads terrible at sometimes, yet the Spirit of the Lord lifted up a Standard against him, and I had sometimes Quietness and a peaceable Habitation; and all along the Lord sustained me, as also under many Doubts and Fears, and Perplexities of Mind, he kept me from utterly fainting, and caused all to work together for Good to me in the End: Time might fail to write of the many grievous Exercises I have undergone, and of the Delivering Hand of God's Power, which as of old hath made the Waters of *Marah* sweet, and hath taken my Feet, as out of the Mire and out of the Clay, and set them upon the Rock: And now I desire to wait upon him, that he may for ever establish my Goings.

And,

And, dearest Father, I take this Opportunity to bow before thee, in humble Praises for thy great Love and Favour towards me, a poor despicable Worm; I did not first love thee, but I loved Vanity and Folly, and divers Lusts and Passions; but thou, Oh Lord! hast loved me, and hast manifested it in the dear Son of thy Love, and thou hast given me the Evidence of it, in visiting, preserving, renewing, and comforting me; I beg the Continuation of thy Favour and Goodness, and that thou may'st sanctify my few remaining Days to the Service of thee, that thy Service may not be unto me as a Matter of Constraint, but it may be as Meat and Drink unto me to do thy Will. Thy temporal Mercies for a pretty long Course of Life have been abundant towards me, that I must say with Jacob, *They are more than I am worthy of*; for all which I desire to render to thee Adoration and Praise, and to sing the Song of Moses, and the Song of the Lamb, saying, *Great and marvellous are thy Works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are thy Ways, thou King of Saints! Into thy Hands I commit and commend my Spirit, not trusting in any Merits of mine own; for I have merited nothing of myself; but on thy abundant Love and Mercy, in thy blessed Son our Lord, I place my whole Confidence and Trust, now and for ever, Amen.*

To my dear Wife and Children.

I Earnestly recommend the Fear of the Lord, and a diligent Watchfulness of Spirit, that you may use the Time given you to an Improvement of your Talents, and the Grace bestowed upon you : Place not your Happiness in the Pleasures, or Treasures, or Grandeur of this fading World, but in the Enjoyment of the Light of God's Countenance, which you will find to be a Fountain of Comfort, an *Heavenly Treasure, that neither Moth nor Rust can corrupt, nor Thieves break through nor steal.* All your Care, Labour, and Endeavours cannot certainly secure unto you Health, or Wealth, or Esteem in the World ; these Things lie in the disposing of Providence, and in some Respects in the Power of others : But the Lord hath, by his Grace, put the obtaining of Truth and Justice, Holiness and Humility, Godliness and Peace, in some sort in our Power, and in those super-excellent Treasures we may improve ourselves, without the Fraud or Violence, or Envyings, or Grudgings, of any who live near us.

And although I desire you may in the first Place seek God's Kingdom, yet in his Fear, and a Holy Submission to his Will, you may be diligent in your Business, and the Concerns that

that lie under your Care: And as I would not have you give way to Immoderate Sorrows, if your Health, or Trade, or Riches, or other comfortable Enjoyments be taken from you, but bless God for the Continuance of his Presence and Love to you, yet you may use such Ways and Means, for the keeping and Preservation of any of these Enjoyments, as, in the Wisdom of God, you shall find expedient; and whether he gives or takes away, you may bless his Holy Name. The Apostle, when he recommended to one of the Churches, *To be fervent in Spirit*; he says also, *Not slothful in Business*; and yet when the Lord calls you to serve him, then leave all for his Service, who will be far more than all else unto your Souls.

It's possible, that had I sought after this World, with the Earnestness that some of my Contemporaries have done, I might leave you a greater Portion of it; but I may say with *Phocion*, an old General of the *Albenians*, *If you prove good, I may leave you enough, if otherwise, too much*: However, I hope it will hold in the Wearing, as not being got by Fraud or Oppression, but by the Blessing of God upon a moderate Industry, and a sober and temperate Management.

You that are grown up, have seen the Manner of my Life amongst you, which hath been attended with great Degrees of Quietness and Peace, both in my Family, and Abroad;

and as my Conversation hath been coupled with Sobriety, and Justice, and Meekness, and Modesty, and the Holy Fear of God, and a waiting upon him, I recommend unto you the Example of my Life; if I have at any Time deviated from those Ways, I would not that you follow me therein; but, I hope, through the Grace of God, I may say (though nothing of myself) my Life may in these Respects be somewhat exemplary to you, who have seen more of it possibly than all the World besides.

I further recommend to you the Practice of Charity, to such as are under Necessities, according as God shall bless you, remembering *that where much is given, much is required*, and the Widow's two Mites are accepted with the Lord, equally with, or beyond Hecatombs, being given with a good Heart; it's a Virtue that gives a present Satisfaction, as well as a future Reward; the liberal and compassionate Soul finds that Sweetness and Comfort, in pious and charitable Distributions, that it's only sorry that it cannot do more; the Lord knows how far I have perform'd my Duty in this Particular, but I have not been without Jealousy at some Times, that seeing the Lord hath been in this Case liberal to me, beyond what I could once have asked, whether I have been proportionably liberal to those that have been in Want.

I would

I would not have you busy yourselves much with the Affairs of others, unless on the Score of doing them Good, or making Peace; and be careful to shun Tale-bearers, and Busy-bodies, and those who are inclined to tattle of their Neighbours; the meddling with such, is like the taking Coals in a Man's Bosom, and the avoiding them, and their Discourses, a Way to live peaceably and quietly, which is a Blessing worthy to be prized.

I have sundry other Particulars to recommend, that may possibly be of Benefit to you in the Conduct of your Lives, when I may be taken from you; and I hope God will give me Opportunity to communicate them to you, either by Word or Writing; but in short, avoid Idleness, as that which breeds Diseases both in Body and Mind, makes People restless and uneasy to themselves; and Pride, which makes them so to others; and abhor all Impurity in Thought, Word, and Deed; resist the very Beginnings of Temptations, and shun the Place where any Breach of Modesty, and good Manners, do appear.

My Prayer for you is, That God may guide you by his Counsel, and in the End bring you to Glory; to this Purpose, attend diligently to the Dictates of his good Spirit, which you may hear within you; for Christ saith, *He that dwelleth with you, shall be in you*; and as you hear and obey him, will conduct you through this troublesome World, in Ways
of

of Truth and Righteousness, and land you at last in the Habitations of everlasting Rest and Peace with the Lord, to praise him for ever and ever.

To my Friends, and those amongst whom I have sometimes laboured in the Ministry, according to the Gift bestowed upon me.

I Do with good Conscience profess and declare, that I have therein acted faithfully, without Prejudice or Partiality; and if my Doctrine hath at any Time seemed sharp or severe, it was by me levelled against the Transgressions, and not against the Person of any; and my Love and Tenderness hath shewn forth and abounded towards the Poor in Spirit, the Holy Mourners, and such as hunger and thirst after Righteousness; and it's a Comfort to me that I have in this Case set the Lord before mine Eyes, that I might minister according to the Ability he bestowed upon me; and though the Impulse on my Mind hath been sometimes more fervent than other, yet have I desired not to open my Mouth without him, and some good Degrees of Faith and Holy Perswasion that he was with me, desiring to discharge my Duty in Faithfulness, during the Day that the Lord mercifully affords me, that I may be able to say at last, *I am clear of*

the

you the *Blood of all Men*, and that I have, as Opportunity hath been afforded, not ceased to declare unto you the Counſel and Will of God.

In which, as you well know, I have endeavoured to avoid vain Diſputings and controverted Notions, too much followed by ſome critical Heads, but have ſtudied rather the plain Path-way of Holineſs, and that practical Religion in which moſt of the different Sects, of thoſe called *Chriſtians*, ſeem to agree: I have conſidered honeſt *Peter*, that bold Diſciple of our great Maſter, who had not followed cunningly deviſed Fables, when he preached the Goſpel, but was an Eye-witneſs of the Glory of Chriſt, and ſo ſpake forth what *he ſaw, and taſted, and handled, of the Word of Life*: And had the many Preachers of this Nation followed this Rule, and ſpoken only what they had ſeen, felt and taſted of, I ſuppoſe there had been much leſs, but much better Preaching; but of this enough, for I deſire rather to be a Cenſor of my own, than of the Actions of others.

The ſame Apoſtle alſo thought it his Duty, while Time laſted, to ſtir up People to Holineſs, and to Virtue; and not only ſo, but uſed his Endeavour, that after his Decease, they might have thoſe Things in Remembrance: I alſo, in my little Measure, recommend thoſe Things to you, which I think expedient and neceſſary for your Growth in Grace,

Grace, and Promotion in the Ways of God-
ness, that you may obtain that incorruptible
Inheritance that will never fade away.

I have observed some who have, on the
Entrance into the Ways of Religion, been
fervent and zealous, and greatly affected there-
with, like those who followed the Lord into
the Wilderness, spoken of in the second of *Jeremias*,
and in Process of Time they have
abated in their Love, and Carefulness, and
Zeal, and have at last sat down in an empty
dry Form, and a Profession without Life, sa-
tisfying themselves that they are accounted
or reckon'd amongst the Number of true Pro-
fessors, without labouring to be acquainted
with the Root of Life in themselves, and
come to Meetings and Places of religious
Worship, but are greatly unconcerned as to
their spiritual Improvement, and the Exercise
of that lively Faith, wherein the Righteous in
all Ages approached to the Lord, and pleased
him; these are they, *Who forsake the Fountain
of living Waters, and are hewing to themselves
broken Cisterns, that will not hold Water.*
Though Cautions, and Refreshments, and
Doctrines may drop as the Rain, or distil as the
small Dew, it's no sooner spoken than forgotten
by those careless Professors: And whereas, had
they been diligent in the Lord's Work, they
might have grown in Faith, and Holiness, and
in Charity, and for the Time might have been
Instructors of others, yet have they need to
return to the first Principles of a *Christian*
Life,

Life, not being come to the Foundation of Repentance from dead Works.

In respect to such Professors as these, my Spirit hath been often concerned, I have lamented their Estate, and in Faithfulness often cautioned them *to be zealous, and to strengthen what remains, to buy Eye-Salve that they may see, and Gold tried in the Fire that they may be rich*; how far my Labour hath been effectual, to the Recovery of any of them, God knows: But I leave with them the foregoing Admonition, which, if it falls into the Hands of any such lukewarm ones, I desire they may lay it to Heart, which may prove of Benefit to their Souls; when, as to bodily Presence, I may be removed.

Some there are who have sometimes felt the Operation of God's Grace, and it hath been delectable to them, and seem'd to grow up in them, and may be still someway disposed towards those Things that are honest and of a good Report, but when they have gone from the Society and Meetings of the Faithful, the Cares of this Life, and the deceitful Enjoyments of this World, have taken Possession of their Minds again, and have darkened their Spirits to that degree, that they have lost the very Sense and Savour of that Sweetness their Souls once had in approaching to God; and some have so frequently and so long suffered their Affections, and the Bent of their Spirits, to dwell on these temporal Delights, and Cares,

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until

until they have lost the very Appetite and Desire after a near Familiarity with the Lord; and by that means have gradually grown weak and infirm, as to the inward Man, that in process of Time the very Seed, God once sowed in them, comes to be choaked by the Briars and Thorns that spring up with it: This is a dismal State, and such must, in the great Day render unto him a dreadful Account, when we shall see plainly, *That 'twill profit a Man nothing to have gained the whole World, and to lose his own Soul.*

We have been invited, my Friends, to this spiritual Banquet, *The Bride saith, Come; and the Spirit saith, Come; and those that will, let them come, and partake of the Waters of Life freely:* Christ stands at the Door and knocks, why should any of us reject or neglect his loving Invitations, by settling our Affections on Things that are on the Earth? But as a People risen with him, *Let us seek those Things that are above,* where he sits at God's right Hand.

Cast off therefore every Weight, all immoderate Desires and Affections to Riches, Honours, Pleasures, or vain Glory; be content with the Distribution of God's Hand in the Way of his Providence, without extending and reaching forth both thy Body and Mind, as if thou thought'st thou could'st never obtain enough of this fading Earth, before thy Mouth be filled therewith; consider the End of those unlimited Appetites and Desires; there

There is mostly Ambition in the Case, that, having gotten this World's Riches, we may obtain its Honour, and that our Families after us may live splendidly, and in Reputation, and all this is but vain Glory: For I have in my Time seen Children have been much hurt every way, both as to this World, and as to that to come, by the Super-abundance left them by their Parents.

Whereas Truth and Religion, and the Fear of God, *they are the Portion of Jacob, a never-failing Inheritance*; where the Blessing of God abides on them, and he provides for them, comforting their Souls, and keeping them in Contentedness, and a Holy Submission to his Divine Will, who hath promised, *That they who fear him shall not want any Thing that is good*: It was an excellent Prayer of Agur, *Give me neither Poverty nor Riches, feed me with Food convenient for me.*

And those, on whom the Lord hath in his Providence bestowed greater Plenty, I am to charge, as the Apostle directs, *Not to be High-minded*; nor to trust in those uncertain Enjoyments, but in that GOD, *who gives us all Things richly to enjoy*, that they love and cherish an humble Mind, and a charitable Disposition, that they may make their Riches subservient to Truth and Religion: Those will not use it so much to adorn themselves, nor to creep by little and little (not from one Degree of Grace unto another, but) from one Degree of Pride

to another, until a haughty Mind hath taken Possession of them; but in their Increase and Abundance will acknowledge God's Goodness, and their own mean Original, as *Jacob* did, reflecting on their own Unworthiness, and the great Mercy of God toward them, they will magnify him, who is worthy, and will bless his Name for ever.

To those who are Educated amongst us, and on that Score do attend our Meetings.

I Recommend that they may be diligent in waiting upon God, and in seeking after that living Virtue, that, through the Heavenly Mediator Christ Jesus, is conveyed to the Soul, and not sit in an empty Form, unacquainted with the Springs of Love, and Life of Truth. This was the Fault of the Children of *Israel*; God had been with their Fathers, and left many blessed Testimonies and Memorials of his Love. They had *Beth-el*, where God appeared unto *Jacob*, and *Gilgal*, where the Stones were laid, which they took out of the Bottom of *Jordan*, and their Children did at certain Times assemble there; but for want of an affectionate seeking the Lord, they lost the Sense of his Love, which occasioned the Prophet to call on them, *Seek the Lord and you shall live, seek not Beth-el, nor go up to Gilgal.* I would have you say, on a better

a better Bottom than *Dathan* and *Abiram* did to *Moses*, Hath the Lord spoken only to our Fathers? Doth he not likewise now speak unto us? May not we, if we be diligent and attentive, hear his inward Voice and follow him, and thus be made Witnesses of his wonderful Works, as well as they who went before us? Such receive the Knowledge of the Truth, not only Traditionally, but in Time come to know the Power of that Life which is Endless, and those are thereby enabled to hold Truth, and live with it in Time of Trial and Exertise, as well as when they are surrounded with Peace and Prosperity. *It will keep them*, said the Spirit of the Lord, *in the Hour of Temptation, which shall come to try those who dwell upon the Earth.*

Remember, I pray you, That the Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom, and think upon the great Blessings of those who are kept in it, that it may always dwell upon your Spirits, in your buying, and selling, and eating, and drinking, and in whatever you are concerned about; then your Associates and Acquaintance, and such as converse with you, may see your Sincerity and Uprightness, that as you can defraud no Man, or over-reach no Man, neither can you mingle in their Excesses of Drinking, or Talking, and Joking, but you will have the Mark and Character of Truth upon you, a Conversation coupled with God's Fear; and thus *Joseph*, and *Daniel*, and others were

were preserved, and obtained an honourable Esteem in the House of God.

And then in all your Meetings you will wait for the Divine Blessing, and the Heart-tendering Power of God that made you, and prepares your Sacrifices, even that of a broken Heart, and contrite Spirit, which is of great Price with the Lord, and you will not trust you nor depend on a bare Education, but according to the Advice of the Evangelical Prophet, you will look unto *Abraham* your Father, and *Sarah* that bore you, to faithful Parents and Elders, and above all, unto *Christ* who redeemed you, whereby you will live in Fellowship with the Church and People of God, while you abide in this World, and will obtain an everlasting Habitation of Life and Peace with the Faithful, when you go out of it.

And to those who are growing towards a State of Manhood, I leave this Counsel: Take diligent Heed what Company you associate with and frequent, for the Temptations of Society insinuate themselves very easily, I might say, almost indiscernably, and indeed so they do, to those who have not the Eye of Faith kept open and watchful, that they may be guarded from the Approaches of the Adversary, on what Side soever he comes: But as you are honest-hearted, and thus heedful to your Ways, you will keep on Armour of Righteousness, both on the right Hand, and on the left, that neither the Threatnings, nor Persecutions,

Persecutions, nor Friendships, nor Flatteries of the World, that lies in Wickedness, shall be ever able to pervert you.

And I do further recommend to you, to be careful that you follow not the Vanities of the Age in Pride and Ostentation; keep plain in your Habits and Houses: Some have thought to recommend themselves by their Niceness of Dress, &c. and their Approaches therein to the Fashions of the World, and have thereby lost Esteem every Way, for the World would not own them, and those who kept strictly to Truth could hardly own them, until it's highly probable they have been slighted by both. Remember that Lusts of the Flesh, Lusts of the Eye, and Pride of Life, are not of the Father, but of this World, and that the Friendship of this World is Enmity with God.

To those who give Way to their inordinate Desires and carnal Appetites, to the Reproach of themselves, and the Profession they make of Religion.

I Have this to leave, Friends, it's but a little Time, and Time to us will come to an End, and then sad will be thine Estate, who like *Esau* hast been selling thy Birth-right for a Mefs of Pottage, and afterward sought a Place

Place of Repentance with Tears, yet could not find it: This is the Condition of all, who give up their Affections and Wills to the Obedience of any Thing against the Will of God; the Judgments of God will take hold on them, and the sooner you bow thereto, the better will it be with you; for although you may rejoice in your Iniquity for a Season, the Eye of the Lord looketh on you, and be assured that a strange Punishment will overtake the Workers of Iniquity; and although they may act their Sins in secret, they will be discovered on the House top.

For some there are who may hide their Sins from the View of Man, while others are more scandalous, making themselves a By-word and a Reproach: These latter may indeed gain more Advantage to the Prophane, and the Wicked to blaspheme the Truth, and to speak Evil of the Way of Godliness, yet if those take Shame and Confusion to themselves, and become truly humbled, and deeply penitent before the Lord, they may possibly be soon recovered and restored to some Degrees of Mercy, than those miserable Wretches, who go on in transgressing and rebelling against God's good Spirit, and if they can but hide from the View of Man, they regard not the All-piercing Eye of the Almighty, and in hiding their Iniquity in their Bosoms, lose the Benefit they might obtain by a publick Shame, which I believe may have been a Means for

the Recovery of some to a Sense of their Condition.

But it's sure, all loose Livers have been, and are, a Trouble to the Church; *I have, said the Apostle, told you of them often, and now tell you, even weeping, they are Enemies to the Cross of Christ, whose God is their Belly:* They glory in their Shame, and their Minds are in Earthly Things, and their End will be Destruction, unless they unfeignedly repent.

These are Spots in our Feasts of Charity, but I have this Satisfaction, that as the Lord hath made Way for it, I have dealt plainly with them, and leave behind me this Caution for their Perusal. I have indeed sometimes questioned whether my Behaviour hath been always attended with that Severity that hath seemed needful towards them; but because some, who have been prevailed on and carried away, are not, I hope, totally dead in Sins, I would, if possible, a little sweeten such, and not by an absolute Strangeness set their Minds against me, and the Doctrine I might sometimes deliver, in relation to their Condition, thinking it my Duty to endeavour their Restoration in a Spirit of Meekness, considering myself, lest I also might be tempted.

I would not have any who would seem zealous for Reformation, and press Things
D hardly

hardly upon others, to give to themselves large a Latitude, it may be, another Way for though Intemperance and Drunkenness are really Contrarieties to the pure Religion, also Pride in Apparel, &c. yet so also is Fraud, crafty and equivocating Speeches, Double-dealing in Trade and Business, and excessive Cares and Worldly-mindedness, I would have none, whilst they inveigh against Pride, in House and Habit, to retain it in their own Hearts, nor to run into Covetousness, whilst they exclaim against Excess, to let Ambition sway their Souls, but equally shun the Appearance of Evil, and to hate the Garment spotted with the Flesh; for though some Sins may be more scandalous in the Eye of Man by reason of an infamous Character fixed upon them, other Sins may be equally as, or more dangerous, whilst the Iniquity is hid in the Bosom, as before hinted,

I know the Upright cannot justify either those, but carry Judgment against them in their Lives and Gestures as well as Words. I do therefore tenderly advise all, as well the proud *Pharisee*, as the prophane *Publican*, to break off their Sins by Repentance, and, like the prodigal Son, to return to the Father's House, otherwise their Profession will but aggravate their Account, in the Day when they must appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ, where an innocent Life, and a clear Conscience will plead more for us than the Greatness of *Alexander*, or all the Treasures of *Egypt*.

*the Poor in Spirit, and those who hunger
and thirst after Righteousness.*

YOU are Babes of the Birth Immortal,
in whom Christ lives, and your Treas-
ure is in Heaven, although in this World
you may be in Heaviness through manifold
temptations; it's the Way your Fore-fathers
and Predecessors entered into the Kingdom of
God.

Therefore be not discouraged, nor faint in
your Minds, the Day of your Deliverance
aweth nigh; Christ your Fore-runner is gone
before, to prepare a Place for you; although
you may have had the Lot of *Lazarus* here,
you'll obtain the Well-spring of Life hereafter;
it's dangerous to have all our good Things in
this Life, and we cannot be Heirs of two King-
doms: Most People lose themselves in a kind
of Stupidity and carnal Ease, and while they
are cumbered about many Things, neglect the
one Thing needful, the better Part, that can-
not be taken away. *Blessed are you that mourn,*
saith our Lord, you shall be comforted: There
are a Multitude of Promises to this State,
throughout the Holy Scriptures, to the Hum-
ble, the Poor, the Contrite in Heart, the
Lord will dwell in them, he will walk in them,

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he will revive the Spirits of the Humble, and the Hearts of his bowed-down Children.

And indeed it's needful, those lowly-minded *Christians* should meet with the Supports of God's Spirit, and the blessed Promises of the Gospel, who otherwise might be apt to be swallowed up with over-much Sorrow; the Enemy, who is as cunning a Serpent as ever, when he can no longer exalt or puff up the Creature, he labours then on the other Hand to destroy our Hope, and to cast down our Confidence; and to perswade us there is no Help for us in God; insomuch, as many have been apt, with *Sion* of old, to say, *The Lord hath forgotten, my God hath forsaken me*: This Condition seems desolate, and here the Enemy makes Use of his fiery Darts; you would do well at such a Season to remember, that though a Mother may forget her Child, God will not forget you; you are graven upon the Palms of his Hands, and your State is very much regarded by him. Did poor Souls but see how much the Lord loves them, even in this dejected Condition, and how he is hereby bringing down Pride, and teaching them Humility, and exalting the blessed Government of the Lord Jesus Christ, they would hope more, and fear less, and say with one of old, *It's the Lord, let him do whatever he sees fit.*

By those Paths, God hath brought, and is bringing many to a peaceable Habitation, and a quiet resting Place, where they are devoted

to his Divine Will, whether they enjoy Plenty
or suffer Want, whether Sickness or Health,
whether Life or Death; and will, with resigned
spirits, say to him, *Thy Will be done in Earth
as it is in Heaven.*

It's but a little while, and as you persist in
the Holy Faith, your Crosses will be turned
into Crowns, your **Hungring** into Enjoyments,
your Poverty to durable Riches, and your
Mourning into Rejoicings before the Throne of
God, and the Lamb, and that for ever and
ever: And I therefore leave this Counsel with
you; cast not away your Confidence, which
hath a great Recompence of Reward.

*To you who are as Elders and Overseers in
the Church, and amongst the People of
God.*

MY dear Love salutes you, especially
those who rule well, whom I count
worthy of double Honour, I know the Growth
of many of you is much beyond mine, and
I had more need to take Counsel from, than
give it to such; yet, as being about to leave
you, I would leave some Token of my Love
with you, which, I hope, will not be un-
acceptable to those who know from whence it
springs.

I shall

I shall begin with somewhat of the Advice of a worthy Apostle; the Elders that are amongst you I exhort; feed the Flock of God freely, willingly, not as Lords over God's Heritage, but be good Examples to the Flock, then when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive a Crown of Glory: You had need set this Crown always in your View, that in Faith and Hope you may labour in the Lord's Work, and wait on him, from whom Heavenly Wisdom and Counsel comes, and ask it of him, who gives liberally to such, and upbraideth none.

For as one observed of old, Wisdom is a grey Head unto Men, and an unspotted Life is old Age, and true Eldership is that which is not measured by Length of Years barely, although we must allow, that such as have long walked in the Ways of Holiness, grow in Knowledge, and in Experience beyond Novices, and may be more acquainted with the Subtilty of the Adversary, and may have a further Sight of the Depths of Satan; yet the right Qualification is, the pouring forth of the Spirit: This fitted for the Work of the Ministry, and this prepares People still for Overseers, and Elders, that they may rule well in the House of God; and when the Lord took of the Spirit that was upon *Moses*, and placed it on the Elders, they were thereby enabled to judge the Lord's People, when they passed through the Wilderness.

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But let it be remembred, they were Men fearing God, and hating Covetousness: These excellent Qualifications dwelt on such Persons, whom the Lord thus concerned in his Church; it hath been an Error of some Professors of *Christianity*, to chuse their Elders and Bishops, by reason of some natural or accidental Advantages, which hath proved a great Detriment to Religion; some, it may be, have been chosen for their Estates, or Families, some for their Learning, and Reputation of Knowledge, some for their quick Wits and Volubility of Expression; it is not so amongst us, though some of those Things may be serviceable in their Places, being kept in Subjection to the Fear of God; but, I hope, my Friends, Fathers, and Brethren, who as Elders and Overseers are exercised in the Affairs of the Church, will principally regard their being endued with the aforesaid Qualifications of the Spirit, living in the Fear of God, and hating Covetousness, Pride, and every evil Way.

It's a great Advantage and Ornament to such to be of peaceable Spirits; Wisdom that comes from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, &c. These will endeavour to heal the Breaches of the Daughter of *Sion*, and will be far from promoting Parties and Factions; the Wisdom aforesaid is without Partiality, as well as without Hypocrisy: It was a severe Rebuke that the Lord's Servant gave the *Jews*, when he said, *Their Prophets were Foxes, they did not make up the Hedge for the House of Israel, nor stand*

Stand in the Breach; whereas those, whom the Lord qualifies and appoints for that Service, they study Peace, and Reconciliation, and the removing Discords and Divisions on what Account soever, and obtain that great Blessing to be called Children of God.

Yet it's not designed hereby to quench the Spirit, and to jumble Professors together, and under a Pretence of maintaining Peace, to let fall our Testimony against Transgression; but we must deal plainly, and judge faithfully, and pass Condemnation too on the Filthy and Fraudulent, the Proud and Wanton, and all Workers of Iniquity, that they may be noted not to have Fellowship with them, as directed by the Lord, especially when they'll not hear the Church, and yet he was meek and low Heart, and proposed himself a Pattern to us therein, as a Means to find Rest unto our Souls.

Dear Friends, whether concerned in Doctrine or Discipline, let your Eye be to the Lord, the great Fountain of Wisdom, that being endued by him, you may speak as the Oracles of God; or if any Man minister, he may do it as of the Ability God giveth, that he in all Things may be glorified through Jesus Christ: And this will bring down the Mind, where Self shall be of no Reputation, but you shall think it Honour enough to be sincerely concerned in the Labour of the Truth, and in the Service of God, and

this Church, who will then be your Shield, and your exceeding great Reward.

To the WORLD in general.

THIS I have observed, in a pretty long Course of Time, there hath been a great Defect amongst Mankind in seeking after the Kingdom of Heaven; there hath been much Earnestness and Passion in seeking Riches, Honours, and Pleasures, according to their several prevailing Inclinations; but we may almost complain with the Prophet, *None saith, Where is the Lord?* Jer. ii. 6, 8.

This hath been Cause of Lamentation and Sorrow to the Upright, that notwithstanding God's Call is unto People, and he is inviting them by his Grace and Spirit inwardly, and by the Testimonies of his Servants sounded in their Ears, yet most People seem as it were deaf to all those Invitations, and altogether unconcerned thereat, like those in the Parable, who made Excuses when they were invited to the Lord's Supper, one went to his Farm, another to his Merchandize, yet, it may be, People read or hear daily or weekly what befel these negligent Ones, but little consider it's their own Case: I should be glad to be made an Instrument to awaken any of those, who are thus asleep in a carnal Security; some can honestly,

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with the Apostle, say, *It's not any Man's Silver, or Gold, or Apparel, they have sought after, but the Good of the Souls of the Children of Men.*

We must indeed acknowledge, some have taken upon them to be Instructors and Teachers of spiritual Things, for base and low Ends, as are all covetous and ambitious Designers; some would get into the Priest's Office to obtain a Morsel of Bread; and some undertake to prophesy, when the Lord did not send them; but these did not *profit the People at all*: Neither are you like to obtain any religious or spiritual Advantage, by such as seek themselves, their own Honour or Interest, more than our blessed Lord Christ Jesus, who, though he sits at the right Hand of the Father, yet he is near to you, visiting your Souls by his Spirit and Grace, he is inwardly calling on you, to turn from every evil Way, unto the great God that formed you; so that, as the Apostle told the *Athenians*, Acts xvii. 27. *You may feel after him, and find him, for he is not far from every one of you*; and he speaks unto us by his blessed Son, the Mediator, and we through him make known our Wants unto our Heavenly Father.

I do therefore leave this as Counsel to those who may live after me, *Not to despise or neglect his inspeaking Voice*, which too many have done to their eternal Ruin: *He, that shall not hearken unto this Prophet, said Moses, shall be cut off from the People of God*: His Word is quick

and powerful, a Discerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart. If People were a little more sedulous to inspect what is in themselves, and the secret Convictions of God's Spirit, they would then be better acquainted with the Voice of Christ speaking to them; they will own and allow, that the Devil (and he is a Spirit too, and a wicked one) tempts them, he moves and incites them to all Iniquity; insomuch, as when a Malefactor is arraigned, they say in his Indictment, "That being moved of the Devil, he did such a wicked Act;" here they allow, that the Evil Spirit calls on People that moves inwardly: Why should not you likewise believe, that the Spirit of God moves there? It would be indeed a miserable wicked World, worse than it yet is, (though it be too too bad already) if the great God had left the Workmanship of his Hand, the most noble Part of it, at least here below, open to all the Invasions, Motions, and Calls of the Evil Spirit, and had not afforded unto us Power, through his Light and Grace, to discern, resist, and avoid, or overcome him: But, blessed be his Holy Name, *He hath laid Help upon one that is Mighty: He hath sent his Son to bless us, by turning every one of us from the Evil of our Ways: The Law of the Spirit of Life, in Christ Jesus, hath made me free,* said the Apostle, *from the Law of Sin and Death:* Therefore let none be disheartned, but look to the Lord, he will renew your Strength, and will cause your

Souls to mount Heaven-ward, *Being risen with Christ, you will seek Things that are above.*

But most People are very careless and stupid as to these Matters, and satisfy themselves to hear tell of it, possibly once in the Week, by the Preachers of their several Societies, but they are few that make Application home, that purchase the Field where this Divine Treasure is, and that dig deep till they find it: I have thought, if People minded Heavenly Things more, and the Pleasures, Glory, and Gaities of this World less, they might see more of the Kingdom of God, and have Fellowship with it, as being near to them, even in them, as our Lord said, and *he would reign in their Hearts* whose Dominion and his Kingdom will never have an End.

Therefore be not as the Beasts that perish who mind only what they eat and drink, and have neither Faith toward, nor Knowledge of the Divine Giver; *But draw ye nigh to him, and he will draw nigh unto you; seek him while he may be found: Those who rejected his Calls and would have none of his Counsel, he laughed at their Calamity, and mocked when their Fear came on them, Prov. i. Whereas such as turned at his Reproofs, he poured out his Spirit on them and made known his Ways unto them:* In which (you may depend on it) is more true and lasting Pleasure, and Soul-satisfaction, than can be in the Lusts of the Flesh, Lusts of the Eye, or Pride of Life: And however some may

comfort

comfort themselves in those Things, *which are not of the Father, but of this World*; yet will they find the End thereof more bitter than Worm-wood, and sharp as a two-edged Sword.

God hath not left himself without a Witness, *He gives Rain from Heaven, and his Works of Creation testify of him*; this Law in the Heart bears Witness against the Transgressor thereof, and this Witness, Judge, and Tribunal, he can never fly from; but Tribulation and Anguish will be the Lot of those that do Evil: How ought we then to demean ourselves perpetually in the View of our Judge, and this great Witness of our Thoughts as well as Deeds? *This is the Condemnation of the World, that Light is come into the World, and Men love Darkness rather than Light, because their Deeds are evil*: And though this might have Relation to that outward and blessed Appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, yet it relates also to him as he is *The hidden Man in the Heart; the Word of God, which is quick and powerful; the Discerner of the Thoughts and Intents of all Hearts*.

The Consideration of these Things I leave to you, and desire you may do it effectually, that the Benefit may be yours; it will be a valuable Treasure to those who lay hold on it, and happy will they be who retain it: I have an Hope, through the never-failing Mercy of God, to meet those in the Heavenly Mansions, which our Lord prepares for those who faithfully follow him.

I might

I might enlarge this my Counsel, by entering into sundry Particulars, but am unwilling to be tedious, the rather, feeling not only some Particulars are occasionally scattered through this present Writing, but in some other Epistles already published, and which may be published in due Time, I have endeavoured to inculcate like Advice: But I also know, that as you hearken to the inward Divine Monitor here recommended, you will learn to demean yourselves with Sobriety, Justice, and Godliness, and not spend your precious Time wantonly, but, *bating the Garment spotted with the Flesh*, will abstain also from Excess of Meats and Drink, Plays and Games, and such idle Pastimes of all Sorts, and from all Transports of Anger and Wrath, from Clamour and Evil-speaking; and, instead of Worldly-minded, you will become Spiritually-minded, and obtain Life and Peace for ever with the Lord.

The Lord lay home the sundry Counsels and Advices herein contained, upon all those concerned, that they may lay hold of Eternal Life, is my Desire and Prayer for them.

In Witness of this my Good-will and Testimony fore-going, I hereunto set my Hand, the 29th Day of the First Month, called March, 1708.

THOMAS GWIN.

A D V I C E

FROM A

F A T H E R

TO HIS

D A U G H T E R S.

DEAR CHILDREN,

IT is the undoubted Duty of every *Christian* to do all the Good he can, whether in respect of his Service or Worship of the great God, our continual Benefactor, or in respect to his Fellow Creatures: From these Principles many good Counsels have been in sundry Ages given forth, which it would do well their Successors might carefully observe and follow; and it is not with Design to out-do what has been done, or to add any Thing new or more excellent, that I set Pen to Paper: But in the first Place to acknowledge the Almighty's Goodness to me, during a Course of pretty many Years; and, secondly, to leave this Advice to you, who may succeed me, that
you

you may not only have the Benefit of my living Testimonies and Counsel, but that you may have this to look upon and consider of, when it shall please God to remove me from you. It may possibly tend to the stirring up your Minds by way of Remembrance, and may be an Entertainment to you, at some vacant or leisure Hours, more profitable than that of vain Books or Romances.

You are not to expect here any curious Method in disposing the following Counsel, but I hope, you will read the godly Concern of a tender Parent, and some of those Things I have been deeply instructed by the Spirit of the Lord, and have drawn from the Courts of God's House, and by abiding in his Holy Tabernacle.

In the first Place therefore, I tenderly advise you, that in all Cases of God's Worship, as well as in respect of your Conduct amongst the Children of Men, as also towards your own Bodies, that you strictly adhere unto that inward and Heavenly Teacher that God hath given to you, that wonderful Counsellor that will never leave you, nor forsake you, if you do not forsake him; but though you may eat Bread of Adversity, he will not be removed into a Corner, but your Eye of Faith, your inward Eye shall see him. 'Tis him of whom Moses spoke, and Paul spoke, when they said *This Word is not far from thee, that thou shouldst say, Who shall ascend into Heaven, or who shall descend*

stand or go beyond the Sea to bring it to thee,
 is nigh in thy Heart, and in thy Mouth, that
 thou may'st bear, do it, and live. It's that
 Grace that brings Salvation, that, teaching to
 resist Ungodliness and Lusts, shews how to live
 soberly, righteously and godly in this present
 evil World.

And indeed, were the Sons and Daughters
 Men diligently attentive unto this Divine
 Oracle, or Word of God; did they love it's
 Testimonies, delight in it's Precepts, long for
 it's Judgments, as *David* in the *xixth Psalm*,
 much of our Labour might be saved of giving
 forth Instructions for the Conduct of your Lives;
 for this would certainly lead you where your
 end would be everlastingly happy, and in your
 Way towards it, you would be sweetly sustain-
 ed by the Cordials of Divine Love, your
 Food would be sure, and your Waters never
 fail.

But such is the Perverseness of Man's Will,
 and so many the Temptations of the Devil,
 who said, *Our Name is Legion, for we are many*;
 that the far greater Part of Mankind refuse
 the Invitations of the Lord, resist his Holy
 Spirit, and kick at his Reproofs; the End of
 whom you may read in the first of *Proverbs*,
 and also how he pours out of his Spirit, and
 makes known his Ways, to such as turn at his
 Reproofs.

It might take up Abundance of Time to lay open the the various Mazes and Errors the World wander in, through this Confederacy betwixt Man's deceitful Heart and our greatest Enemy, to the drawing them from under the Law, the Light and Directions of God's Spirit; but to touch on some few, there are Honour, Riches, and Pleasures of this World; the Wills of Men are too apt to be captivated by, and so very diligent are they in hearkning to the Calls of these, that they have not Room nor Attention to hear the Lord, and his Knocking at the Doors of their Hearts; nay, their Hearts are so taken up with the visible Enjoyments of this World, that they neglect the invisible Enjoyments of God's Peace, and the Reward promised, which is *Life for evermore.*

I hope your own Observation will give you to see, with what Zeal, what Fervency, what Passion, these Things are followed after, how from it comes the great Mischiefs of Wars and Fighting, of Strife and Contention, of Uneasiness and Discontent, with which the Lives of poor People are racked, and whereby many end their Days in Despair, whereas *God's Ways*, rightly understood and lived in, are *Ways of Pleasantness*, and all his Paths are *Peace.*

Now the Way of wandering being called the broad Way that leads to Death, I hope you will be the better pleased with these few
 Advices

Advices that tend to the keeping you in the narrow Way that leads to Life, in which there will be need of Watchfulness, that you may not be prevailed upon by the Violence of your Adversary, nor surprized by his Stratagems, nor caught by any false perishing Delight, but may persist stedfastly in the Ways of Godliness, and obtain the End of the Righteous, which is Peace with God for ever.

To this Purpose, avoid Ambition and fleshly Emulation, never contend with any in Glory ; you may see many Examples of such before you, some that may appear gay and flourishing ; but could you but behold their Inside, how it is lacerated and torn by Passion, what Work Envy and other Vices make there, I am confident you would never desire to be in the Condition of such. It's a great Happiness to be satisfied in our own State, without grudging or repining at all at the Advantages of others, and so robbing our Souls of Peace : There are many of those who seem prosperous, yet cannot obtain this Jewel of internal Peace ; there are always some above them, they have not the Benefit of what they possess, but are ever hunting after more with an insatiable Appetite, wherein they meet many and great Disappointments, so that they pass their Days in Anxiety, and often conclude them with Sorrow ; whereas those, who live contented with the Providence of God, without Envy, without Ambition, and a Train of
 P a Discontents,

Discontents, obtain the Blessing of the Meek, and so come to inherit the Earth.

To this End, seek not great Things to yourselves, as was the Prophet's Advice to *Baruch*. Propose to yourselves a living low, and whatever God gives you in this World, be sure to live within Compass, not launching out into the Luxury and Gaudiness of the Age, however many soever their Examples may be, not exceeding in the Humour of Dress and Bravery in Furniture and Servants, and particularly in gratifying your Bellies with rich and costly Viands. How have I beheld some that have done so, until they have run out all, and more than all, and made themselves at last ridiculous, becoming Objects of Shame and of Pity! Nay, which is worse, they have been thereby disabled from paying their just Debts, and in a little Time I have beheld such Objects of seeming Admiration, become the Scorn of the Multitude; and those who kept their fine Horses, Dogs, Servants, &c. all high and pampered, stripped of all, and themselves reduced so low, that those who formerly admired them, will scarcely see or meet with them, if to be avoided: But another great Misery is, many poor labouring Men have been undone by them, whose Goods they have taken on Credit, and now cannot pay for the same.

The more Immediate Examples you have had, *viz.* in your Parents, may be a Means to induce you to another Course of Life, who delighted

delighted not to make a Figure, but to owe
 no Man any Thing, to love one another,
 and to make their Accounts even with all,
 and with all Speed; to do justly and uprightly
 by all People, that they might live quietly in
 this World, and go comfortably out of it at
 last: These will, I hope, prevail on you to
 follow their Steps, that you may never be in-
 volved in those many Miseries that attend on
 the Luxurious, the Ambitious, and High-
 minded, the Careless, and Spend-thrift, and
 those who would be Rich, yet take not laud-
 able Methods, and so fall into many Snares,

I further recommend to you, to shun Idle-
 ness, and to spend your Time in some useful
 Employment, which will contribute to your
 Health, and render Time less tedious; Idle-
 ness is the Parent of many Vices, the Ground
 and Bottom of some Diseases; fills the Mind
 with Thoughtfulness, nourisheth Melancholy
 and Vapours: How many laborious Persons
 scarcely know the Assaults of these Diseases,
 which easily over-take the Idle: Others they
 learn to be Gossippers, and more full of News
 than a *Gazette*, talking of their Neighbours,
 to the stirring up of Strife and Debate, till
 their Conversation becomes a Burden. Such
 Company and Associates, I need not much
 warn you against, not having observed your
 inclinations to tend that Way; but as you
 observe to keep yourselves usefully employed,
 such Vermin will be excluded from your Ha-
 bitations: Remember the Commendation of
Dorcas,

Dorcas, in the *Acts*, when the Poor brought forth and shewed the Coats she had made them.

Yet would I not you should do ought of Kind for Ostentation, but for Charity; mind, that where God gives much he requires much; therefore, if the Lord cause Riches to increase, you must the more contribute to those that are in Want, may find honest, industrious Objects sufficient to bestow your Overplus on: For I would have you give to maintain Pride, and Intemperance, and Lewdness; yet if such are uneminent Necessity, they must likewise be helped: But your charitable Hand must be extended to the Members of Christ, and such through Age and Sickness, and Violence Persecutors, are disabled from obtaining comfortable Livelihood.

But if it should so happen, that the Lord should withhold the Blessing of Plenty, which he hath hitherto given you, take Care that you despond not in your Spirits; cast your Care on him, for he careth for you: Remember *Jacob* was exposed at *Beth-el*, when he lay only the Stones to lay his Head on; he enjoyed then the glorious Vision, and the Lord's Promise to care for him: It's possible Riches might puff you up, and a low Condition might better suit with the Health of your Souls, was a noted Saying of the *Lyrick Poet*,

cui deus obtulit parca quod satis est manu
 which one thus Englisheth:

*Happy is he to whom the Bounty of Heaven,
 Sufficient, with a sparing Hand, hath given.*

God's peculiar People have not often had
 cause to boast of their temporal Advantages,
 I hope and believe, as you avoid all Ex-
 cess and Ambition, and luxurious Living, you
 will never fall under great Want; but this
 caution I thought needful, that you may (should
 so happen) not lose your Courage, but in
 dark and dismal Seasons may rely upon,
 and trust in the Power of the Almighty, who
 uses all Things to work together for Good,
 to those that fear his Name.

In like Manner, whatever Affliction attends
 you, do not sink under it, nor any way give
 your Confidence, but so much the more let
 your Trust in God be renewed; these may be
 termed of three Sorts, to say, some of God's
 sending; secondly, some of Men's procuring;
 thirdly, some we bring upon ourselves; and
 these may be all improved to our Benefit, if
 we make a right Use of them: As, first,
 those of God's sending, as are some Diseases,
 and Sickneses, and Loss of Children, &c.
 they are Seasons of Trial; and if we quietly
 submit to his Divine Will, we come forth of
 them, as Gold purified in the Fire, with our
 Affections the more weaned from temporal and
 fading Enjoyments: These may be called
 God's

God's Jewels, and his People hereby wonderfully prize him and adore his great Love.

Secondly, Afflictions from Men, as Persecutors, Oppressors, and wicked and injurious Neighbours, this greatly aggravates their Account, but it renders the Sufferers more bright, while they thereby are driven nearer to the Lord, and take Sanctuary in him, who is their Rock of Defence; he sweetly sustains their Souls, and prepares them for that durable Inheritance, *where the Wicked cease from troubling, and where weary Souls are at Rest.* Thirdly, But the worst Sort of Troubles are those People bring upon themselves, by their own Passions and carnal Inclinations, by their Vices and riotous Living, &c. and indeed, this is a hard Case, yet in this dismal Estate, if any turn truly to God, he will be merciful to them, he will receive them with Fatherly Love and Kindness, as you may read in the Parable of the Prodigal Son.

But it will greatly tend to the Happiness of your Lives, to mortify your inordinate Desires; here the real Jewel of Content is to be obtained, and no where else; and this Jewel is valuable beyond Expression, for it will make you rich in all Conditions, and render you happy amidst all the Noises and Disturbances of the World. It was a worthy Observation of Dr. Taylor, "Nothing is Felicity, but when
" what is reasonably and orderly desired is obtained; for the having what we do not
" desire,

desire, or the desiring what we cannot have, or the desiring what we should not, are the several consistent Parts of Infelicity, and it can have no other Constitution." I may therefore well advise you to be watchful over your Desires, in order to a happy Life: But *Seneca* has long since writ so amply and excellently on that Bottom, that I may be excused in my shortness, and refer you to him, to read and consider, not for Delight, or to pass Time away, but to treasure up, and improve in all your Conversation.

But above, and beyond all other Books, of which many are good, and writ with good Intent, I desire you may study the Holy Scriptures of the Prophets and Apostles, and particularly their Accounts concerning our blessed Lord, his Actions, Example, Precepts, and Counsels, and that you may carefully conform your Lives thereunto, and that you would daily strictly examine yourselves: Call to Remembrance what you have been doing that Day, and how you have spent your precious Time, you will find a Judge near that will approve or condemn whatever you have done, and will pardon your Misdeeds on true Repentance, and here you will grow capable more and more to discern your great Enemy, and will find the greatest to be those of your own House in your own Hearts.

Those, *Isaiab* the Prophet spoke of, knew their Judge, and said, *The Lord is our Judge,*
G the

the Lord is our Law-giver, and King, and Saviour: And can you think this any other than a glorious Priviledge, where God is Judge, he is in the Conscience? Iniquity cannot abide, and Transgression will fly before him, and those come to the Knowledge of him as a Law-giver and a King, who governs them, and gives sometimes Peace as a River, and the Enjoyment of his Love as a flowing Stream.

As to your marrying, as I would not you should neglect any suitable Opportunity in the Case, so neither would I have you hasty therein; it's a sure Proverb, "They that marry in Haste, repent at Leisure:" Consider the Man and his Manners, rather than his gay Apparel, and beaush Appearance; many have tied themselves to a fair Face, and found it a foul Bargain; such oftentimes neglect their Wives and Children, and living high become Bankrupts; with these, Women sell their quiet and peaceable Living for a meer Fancy: But if Providence give you the Offer of Person sober and temperate, just and loving, prudent and careful, and above all religious, fear not to engage yourselves with such, there is no Doubt but you will spend your Time comfortably together, and become each others Joy and Delight. Take Care also, when married, to study your Husband's Temper; never to upbraid or provoke him; to be careful of his Concerns; prudent in your Carriage to his Relations; to love him with an entire Affection, and, forsaking all others, cleave only to him.

en may you have sufficiently the Command
his Heart; and if so, he will deny you no-
ing that is fit or convenient: Read over Solo-
on's Character of a virtuous Woman; I will
ly tell you here his finishing Stroke, *She*
opens her Mouth with Wisdom, and in her Tongue
is the Law of Kindness.

I might instance to you sundry other Points
moral Behaviour, but I hope short Hints
will serve; the rather for that I did not fail
fit Opportunities to recommend those Things
you, while the Lord gave me Ability; and
would the Remembrance of it may remain
with you whilst you abide in this World; and
know, that Guide, I recommended you to
first, will lead you in these Ways of Low-
ness, and Humility, and Diligence, and Self-
denial, so as you may bring Glory to God, and
comfort to your own Souls.

But that which will contribute abundantly to
your happy Living, is to submit your Wills in
all Things to the Will of him that made you;
as do not learn this Lesson, they generally
pass away their Days in Discontent, and Un-
happiness, they do as it were make War against
Heaven, and are sure to fall in the Contest at
last: There is however a great Aptness in
man to seek after the fulfilling his own Will;
he would be rich, and healthy, and reputable,
and strong, when it pleases God sometimes we
should be poor, and sickly, and despised, and
persecuted; and Oh! how hard is this to deny our-
selves,

selves, and to follow the Lord through the
 Difficulties! What Repugnances are there
 Flesh and Blood! What Strivings in Man
 have his own Will! But such as have learnt
 this Submission of Will will say, *Since the Lord*
so orders it, I am content; I could be glad,
God had made the Passages of my Life easy
but since it's otherwise, his Will be done: It was
 Part of that Prayer our Lord taught his Dis-
 ciples, *Thy will be done:* And this Lesson the
 Apostle was far advanced in, when he had
 learned, *In what Condition soever, he was therein*
with content. And I can tell you somewhat
 my own Experience in this Case; for although
 I have not been called to Poverty or Disgrace
 yet have been much attended with violent
 Pains and Weakness, and Death of Children
 and am now reduced to great Disability of
 Body; yet, in all my Sufferings, this has been
 my Comfort, that it was God's Will; which
 I was bound quietly to submit unto: This has
 rendered my Condition easy, and my Pain
 tolerable, and my Soul comfortable, amidst
 the great Torments I have under-gone. It was
 a notable Saying of *Epictetus*, tho' a Heathen
 "Lead me, Oh God! wheresoever thou
 "pleasest, and I will follow thee; where
 "should I refuse to do, I should be wicked
 "and yet must notwithstanding follow thee
 This true Submission of Will to God, will be
 a certain and undoubted Cure for all the Evils
 that befall us, and, if rightly applied, will
 turn our Losses into Gains, or Sorrows to
 joyful Rejoicings, and our Sickneses to
 Health.

Health of our Souls, and this short transitory Life to everlasting Rejoicings in the Presence of God, and the Lamb, and his Holy Angels, World without End.

And indeed, none but those that thus resign their Wills, can perform the End for which God created them, that is, *to glorify God, and enjoy him*: We shall otherwise be apt to think that God deals hardly with us; that he distributes his Blessings and Mercies not according to Desert; that he forsakes the Just and Pious, and causes his Face to shine upon the Wicked; all which is not only a charging God foolishly, but falsely: *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right!* said one formerly, *from whom all the Measures of Equity and Justice proceed*: But this happens by Man's over-prizing those Things he calls temporal Blessings, and reckoning that where those Things abound, there the Lord shews Mercy: Alas! those are greatly mistaken: Hast never read, *I have seen Riches given to the Owners thereof for their Hurt, &c.* but the great Blessings, God Almighty disposes to the Children of Men, are a good Conscience, honest Thoughts, and an Heart disposed to follow (not its own Lusts, but) the Lord alone, *in the Way of Regeneration*.

Therefore, dear Children, let it be your daily Exercise, in a profound Humility, to wait upon him, to worship him, until he calls you to converse with him: Remember how he called on the *Jews*, *Isai. i. To wash and make clean,*

clean, to cease to do Evil, and learn to do well, then come let us reason together, saith the Lord. This inward Converse with God's Spirit, is the most valuable Treasure, (tho' infinitely neglected) that's bestowed upon the Children of Men; fear not to entertain it, be not driven from it, under Pretence of *Enthusiasm*, or any Thing else; for though indeed all the World are but as Grass-hoppers before him, yet he humbles himself to help his humble People. *He binds up their broken Hearts, and heals all their Wounds:* And those who worship him thus, *worship in Spirit and Truth*; and so acceptably, and God blesses them with his renewed Goodness, and Manifestation of his Presence, to the Comfort of their Souls.

We have many Times large Stories told us of God's Omnipresence, of his being present at all Times and all Places, and that there is nothing hid from him, yet at the same Breath almost, these People will tell us, as if there were nothing of God in our Hearts and Consciences, that it's only Whim and Folly; but miserable Comforters are all such: That that which is God's Throne, and Dominion, and particular Government, should be void of that Presence which they allow every where else. No Marvel, that those make their *Way become vain in their Knowledge, and their foolish Hearts are darkned*: I could bring Abundance of Scripture-authority for this Doctrine, but my Design of Brevity will not admit of many; yet you may consider that of the *Romans*, x.

Say

Say not in thy Heart, *Who shall ascend to bring Christ down? Nor, Who shall descend to bring him up? The Word is nigh thee, in thy Heart, &c.*

This Word will continually instruct you, as you duly give heed to it, I say *duly heed it*, because it's undeniable, that some Persons have followed their own foolish Conceits, and whimsical Fancies, and so have run into great Folly, and some into Looseness and Carnality; and it's mostly such as have once in some Measure known God, but not *honoured him as God*, nor *were thankful*, that have been thus darkned; therefore take Care you are not drawn away by any such Error, but remember, that *God's Spirit was*, and ever will be, *a Spirit of Holiness*; therefore, whatever Exercises or Illuminations he sends or brings into your Souls, you will always find they tend to make you Holy, that you may advance and grow in Godliness, in the Fear and Love of God, and those you may boldly receive and adhere unto; this will not only render your Lives happy here; but bring you to the Enjoyment of an ever blessed Eternity, where all Tears will be wiped from your eyes, and as you glorify God in this World, so you will enjoy him for ever.

And as you thus do, I shall not make the least Doubt but that your Guide will be near to you, your *Teacher will not be removed into a Corner*, but your Eye of Faith will behold him, and he will *purge out the old Leaven of Hypocrisy*

Hypocrisy and Wickedness, and you will be renewed in your Minds to bless and praise his Name, which is the great Work for which he formed us; This People hast thou formed for thyself, they shall shew forth thy Praise.

But some may be apt to say, Here is good moral Doctrine, but nothing relating to Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ: I must indeed acknowledge, that *without Faith it's impossible to please God*: But some Men, whether drawn to it by Heat of Dispute, or of their own critical Disposition, have made Systems of Faith, and tied People to them under the Penalty of Damnation, that can scarcely be understood by any one in their Senles; such Systems are wrongfully called *Articles of Faith*; it is another Sort than that of the Apostle, *If thou confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy Heart that God raised him from the Dead, thou shalt be saved*: This was plain and simple, and fitted to vulgar Understanding; and those who come to this living Faith, they will naturally prize the Appearance of our blessed Lord, value his Holy Example and Precepts, and look upon him as the Heavenly Mediator, by and through whom all the Blessings of Almighty God are conveyed to the Children of Men; those adore him as the primitive Christians did, they look upon him as the *Salvation of Mankind, a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of God's Church*. They shew forth, as James said, *Their Faith by their Works*, and not by vain jangling

and disputing; and as they believe the Holy Scriptures to be given forth by Divine Inspiration, so those cast their Souls and Spirits on the Mercies of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who hath said, *Behold I am with you to the End of the World*: And those, who thus know him with them, cannot but love him, honour him, and believe in him, who is God over all, blessed for ever.

The Prophet *Micah*, in Answer to that notable Question, *How shall I present myself before the great God?* Says, *It's not Thousands of Rams, nor Rivers of Oil, to which might be added, nor a Head filled with Notions, that God accepts, but to do justly, to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with God*: And to this End have been all the foregoing Counsels and Advices, though branched out into many Particulars: But lest you should forget them, I may here recapitulate and bring those Instructions into yet less Compass, that they may the more easily rest upon your Memory; and the Lord give you Strength and Desire to put them in Practice, that so your Lives may be happy, and you may finish your Course with Joy, and arrive at the ever blessed Habitation of the Just, to praise God for ever and ever.

First, Then I advise you to keep your Eye stedfast to that Witness God has placed in you, that you may not be drawn from it by the Honours, Riches, and Pleasures of this World.

2. To avoid carefully all Ambition and Emulation.

3. Not to seek great Things to yourselves, but to be strict in all Cases of Justice.

4. To shun Idleness, and spend your Time in some useful Employment.

5. To shew Mercy according as God shall enable you.

6. Not to despond under Crosses and Losses, but to trust in God.

7. To mortify your Passions and inordinate Affections, as what will tend to a happy Life.

8. Call yourselves daily to an Account how you spend Time.

9. In your Marriage, prize the Man and his Manners, before Figure and Appearance.

10. Study Resignation, and submitting your Wills to God's Will.

11. The End of our Creation is to glorify God, and enjoy him.

12. A Distinction betwixt that Faith which consists in Notion, and that which purifies the Soul.

You will, as you read this over considerately, and sundry other Things that could not be so well drawn into Order; as carefully to shun and fly from the Serpentine Sting of Pleasures, to keep yourselves pure, with sundry Quotations of Authors, which I have taken Notice of, and been well pleased with; but above all you are refered to that *Word of God*, which is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged Sword, piercing, to the dividing asunder betwixt Joints and Marrow, Soul and Spirit; and is the Discerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart, &c.

And my Prayer for you is, That God may open the Eye of your Understandings, that you may behold him, and, beholding, may love him with all your Hearts, may honour and worship him, and in all Humility may bow before him, and at last come to the Enjoyment of his Blessing, even Life for evermore.



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